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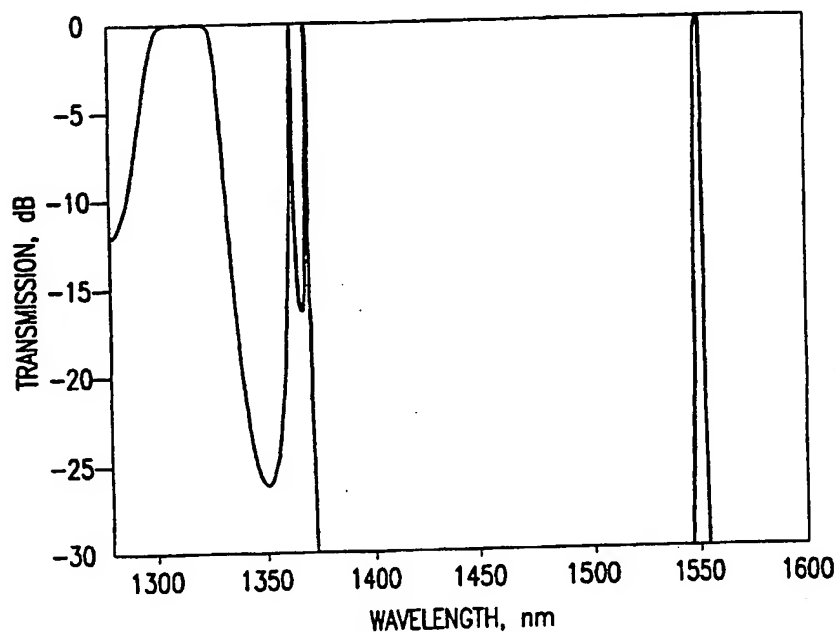
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- (72) Inventors: ARCHAMBAULT, Jean-Luc; 240 Poe Court, Severna Park, MD 21146 (US). PELEKHATY, Vladimir; 305 Old Crossing Drive, Baltimore, MD 21208 (US). For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: DUAL TRANSMISSION BAND INTERFERENCE FILTER



(57) Abstract: A dual-band optical filter is disclosed which has two transmission bands. The first band is relatively narrow (about 1 nm) and encompasses a wavelength of about 1550 nm, while the second band is relatively broad (greater than 50 nm) to transmit wavelengths in a range of 1300-1400 nm. Accordingly, the filter can be used in wavelength division multiplexed communication systems to simultaneously select a payload channel having a wavelength of approximately 1550 nm, and a 1310 nm service channel.

DUAL TRANSMISSION BAND INTERFERENCE FILTER

The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provision Patent Application Serial No. 60/130,212, filed April 20, 1999.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to optical interference filters and more particularly to a dual band optical interference filter capable of transmitting optical channels within a first and second passbands.

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Optical interference filters rely on principles of interference that modify the intensities of the reflected light incident on a surface. A familiar example of interference is the colors created when light reflects from a thin layer of oil floating on water. Briefly stated, by modifying the interface of a substance and its environment with a third
10 material, reflectivity of the substance can be significantly altered. This principle is used in the fabrication of optical interference filters. These filters can be used as one of, or as the main filtering element in optical add/drop multiplexers employed in optical communication systems to select one or more channels from a transmission signal.

In its most simple form, an optical interference filter includes a cavity which is
15 comprised of two partial reflectors (or mirrors) separated by a spacer. The number of spacers determines the number of cavities of the filter. Each partial reflector, also referred to as a quarter-wave stack, is typically constructed by depositing alternating layers of high and low refractive index dielectric materials upon a substrate where each layer has an optical thickness (defined as: physical thickness x refractive index) of a

quarter wave ($\lambda/4$) (or odd multiple of a quarter wave) at the desired wavelength λ_0 of the filter. Exemplary high and low refractive index dielectric materials are TiO_2 , Ta_2O_5 and SiO_2 , respectively. The spacer is typically a half-wave (or multiple half-wave) layer of low refractive index material (e.g., SiO_2). An interference filter has an associated transmission characteristic which is a function of the reflectance of the layers of high and low index materials associated with the stack.

In many applications, optical interference filters are constructed using multiple cavities. Typically, cavities are deposited on top of other cavities, with a quarter-wave layer of low index material therebetween. Multicavity filters produce transmission spectra that are preferred in optical communication systems where steep slopes and square passbands are needed to select one or more optical channels. The larger the number of cavities employed, the steeper the slope of the transmission bandwidth associated with a particular filter. The transmission bandwidth of a multicavity filter is wider as compared with the transmission bandwidth associated with a single cavity filter.

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary transmission spectrum for a mirror comprising a plurality of high/low refractive index dielectric layers. The mirror exhibits high reflectivity at a stopband centered at λ_0 and rippled sidelobes including points A, B and C.

FIG. 2 is an exemplary transmission spectrum for a single cavity optical interference filter utilizing a pair of stacks each having the transmission spectrum shown in Fig. 1. As can be seen in FIG. 2 the transmission response is acceptable at wavelength λ_0 (approximately 1550nm). However, the response at wavelength λ_1 (approximately 1310nm) falls on the sidelobe and/or within the ripple band of the transmission spectrum, thereby making transmission of a particular wavelength in this range unreliable. More

specifically, the single cavity interference filter produces high transmittance at wavelengths referenced at points A and B, but also produces relatively low transmittance as referenced at point C. Thus, transmission at a first wavelength λ_0 may be reliable while transmission for wavelength λ_1 within the ripple band or sidelobe slope are subject to variations in the transmission characteristic. This is also true for wavelengths in the 1625nm range. FIG. 2 demonstrates that interference filters typically provide a single reliable transmission band.

As noted above, optical systems can utilize one or more interference filters to select particular channels from a transmission signal. For example, a first filter may be used to select a pay-load channel associated with voice and/or data transmission in the 1.5 μ m range and a second filter is used to select a service channel in the 1.3 μ m or 1.6 μ m range which carries system level and/or network monitoring information. The use of two separate filters, however, has several disadvantages. First, it increases overall system cost since it requires the manufacture and installation of two individual components. Secondly, optical networks typically have a predetermined loss budget, if exceeded, can compromise signal integrity. Each component, in this case an optical filter, contributes some loss to the overall network. By using two separate filters to select a payload channel and a service channel, each filter negatively impacts a network's loss budget.

Thus, there is a need for a filtering element used with optical communication systems capable of selecting a first and a second optical passbands. There is a further need to provide such a filtering element which reliably selects at least one wavelength corresponding to a payload channel as well as a wavelength corresponding to a service channel within an optical network.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description of the presently preferred embodiments thereof, which description should be considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

5 Fig. 1 illustrates a transmission spectrum of a conventional mirror including a plurality of dielectric layers;

 Fig. 2 illustrates a transmission spectrum of a single cavity filter including conventional mirrors;

 Fig. 3(a) illustrates a single-cavity interference filter consistent with the present
10 invention;

 Fig. 3(b) illustrates a dual-cavity interference filter consistent with the present invention;

 Fig. 3(c) illustrates a three cavity interference filter consistent with the present invention;

15 Fig. 4 illustrates a transmission characteristic of an exemplary triple cavity interference filter having a narrow transmission band at a wavelength around 1550 nm and a broad transmission band at a wavelength around 1310 nm;

 Fig. 5 illustrates schematically a mirror having q dielectric layers of alternating high and low refractive indices;

20 Fig. 6 illustrates a transmission characteristic associated with the mirror shown in Fig. 5;

 Fig. 7 illustrates the refractive index of each of the layers of an exemplary mirror utilizing the structure described in Fig. 5;

Fig. 8 illustrates a transmission characteristic of a three cavity filter consistent with the present invention;

Fig. 9 a composite dielectric layer consistent with an aspect of the present invention;

5 Figs. 10(a) and 10(b) illustrate a transmission characteristic and structure, respectively, of a two-material mirror consistent with an aspect of the present invention; and

Fig. 11 illustrates a transmission characteristic of a three-cavity filter using the mirror shown in Fig. 10(b).

10

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The interference filter in accordance with the present invention transmits a narrow ($\approx 1\text{nm}$ wide) wavelength band around a first center wavelength λ_0 (e.g., $\lambda_0 \approx 1550\text{nm}$) along with a broader ($\approx 20\text{nm}$ wide) wavelength band around a second center wavelength λ_1 , (e.g., $\lambda_1 \approx 1310\text{nm}$). This can best be explained with reference to a multilayer dielectric mirror with sufficiently high and broad transmission band around wavelength λ_1 . The high transmission peaks (referenced at points A and B in Fig. 1) are positioned within the passband of the multilayer dielectric mirror corresponding to wavelength λ_1 which is the center wavelength of the second broad band. If the first high transmission peak is chosen to coincide with λ_1 (i.e., peak referenced at A) the following equations can be used to determine the parameters of the basic multilayer dielectric mirror:

$$\frac{n_H(\lambda_1)}{n_L(\lambda_1)} = \frac{1+r}{1-r} \quad (1)$$

$$r = \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{\sin\left(\frac{\pi}{2} \frac{\lambda_1}{\lambda_i}\right)}{\sin\left(\frac{\pi}{2} \frac{(q-1)}{(q+1)}\right)} \right)^2} \quad (2)$$

where $n_H(\lambda_1)$ and $n_L(\lambda_1)$ are high and low refractive indices at λ_1 ; r is the absolute value
 5 of the magnitude Fresnel reflection coefficient for the boundary between the high and low
 index layers; and q is the number of layers in the stack or mirror. Equations (1) and (2)
 can be satisfied, for example, with $n_H(\lambda_1) \approx 2.05$ (Ta_2O_5), $n_L(\lambda_1) \approx 1.44$ (SiO_2), $\lambda_0 =$
 1550nm, $\lambda_1 = 1310\text{nm}$, and $q = 13$. In this manner, for a wavelength $\lambda_0 (\approx 1550\text{nm})$,
 broad band transmission is achieved for a wavelength centered at $\lambda_1 (\approx 1310\text{nm})$ as well as
 10 narrow band transmission at wavelength λ_0 .

Turning to the drawings in which like reference characters indicate the same or
 similar elements in each of the several views, Fig. 3(a) schematically describes a single-
 cavity interference filter in accordance with the present invention comprising a spacer 30
 interposed between a first and second mirrors 25 and 26. Fig. 3(b) illustrates a dual
 15 cavity interference filter 40 having a coupling layer 70 interposed between a first cavity
 45 and a second cavity 75. Coupling layer 70 can be, for example, a low index material
 having a quarter wave optical thickness. First cavity 45 includes mirrors 50 and 60
 separated by spacer 55. Second cavity 75 includes mirrors 80 and 90 separated by spacer
 85. Similarly, Fig. 3(c) illustrates a triple cavity interference filter 100 having a first
 20 cavity 105, a second cavity 110 and a third cavity 115. First coupling layer 106 is
 positioned between first cavity 105 and second cavity 110. Second coupling layer 117 is
 positioned between second cavity 110 and third cavity 115. First cavity 105 comprises
 mirrors 102 and 103 separated by spacer 104. Second cavity 110 includes mirrors 111

and 113 separated by spacer 112. Third cavity 115 includes mirrors 118 and 120 separated by spacer 119.

Fig. 4 illustrates a transmission characteristic of an exemplary triple cavity interference filter having a narrow transmission band at wavelength λ_0 (around 1550nm) and a broad transmission band at wavelength λ_1 (around 1310nm).

The interference filter described above has the properties which allow it to transmit both a narrow band centered at wavelength λ_0 ($\approx 1550\text{nm}$) and a broad band at wavelength λ_1 ($\approx 1310\text{nm}$). However, this embodiment transmits the bands for a particular wavelength λ_0 . If a different wavelength, for example $\lambda_0 \pm \Delta$, is selected within the ITU channel grid and the gain band of an erbium doped fiber amplifier (1530-1570nm), the broad transmission band centered around λ_1 would shift from 1310nm proportionally with Δ , the difference between λ_0 and 1550nm. The broad transmission band centered around λ_1 (for example, 1310nm) can be maintained for different values of λ_0 , if the high transmission region in the pass band of the multilayer dielectric mirror is greater than 20nm, which is sufficient to provide the dual band characteristics for a fixed pair of λ_0 and λ_1 .

The high transmission band around wavelength λ_1 associated with the mirror shown in Fig. 1 can be broadened by collapsing the adjacent transmission peaks A and B and eliminating low transmission point C. This is achieved by depositing a dielectric material having a refractive index $n_{H1} \approx 1.55 - 1.58$ for the third layer as well as for the q-2 layer in the mirror. For example, Fig 5 illustrates a mirror having q dielectric layers of alternating high (H) and low (L) refractive indices. The third layer and the q-2 layer have an associated refractive index of $\approx 1.55 - 1.58$. Fig. 6 illustrates a transmission

characteristic associated with this mirror structure resulting in a broader transmission band around wavelength λ_1 ($\approx 1310\text{nm}$).

Fig. 7 graphically illustrates the refractive index of each of 17 layers ($q=17$) of an exemplary mirror utilizing the structure described with reference to Figs. 5 and 6. Ta_2O_5 ($n_H \approx 2.05$) was selected as the high refractive index material for layers 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 17. SiO_2 ($n_H \approx 1.44$) was selected as the low refractive index material for layers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16. Layers 3 and 15 have refractive index $n_{H1} = 1.58$. Layers 3 and 15 may be deposited either by a properly ratioed co-deposition of high and low index materials, or by depositing materials having a refractive index of 1.58 (e.g., mullite, which is a mixture of 76-80% of Al_2O_3 and 20-24% of SiO_2).

A three cavity interference filter having the structure described with reference to Fig. 3(c) where each mirror (102, 103, 111, 113, 118 and 120) is formed using the structure described in Figs. 5-7. A transmission characteristic associated with this three cavity filter is shown in Fig. 8. As can be seen, the 110nm broad transmission band around wavelength λ_1 ($\approx 1310\text{nm}$) allows a choice of wavelengths λ_0 within the gain band of a typical erbium doped fiber amplifier (1520nm - 1570nm) without sacrificing transmission around wavelength λ_1 .

The interference filter described above calls for the deposition of a third material having an intermediate refractive index value in the range of 1.55-1.58 with respect to the high and low refractive index materials forming each mirror. However, the introduction of this third material into the deposition process is less desirable from a manufacturing perspective. Accordingly, the third material having an intermediate refractive index used to form layers 3 and $q-2$ (e.g. layers 3 and 15 referenced in Fig. 7) of an exemplary mirror

can be formed by a symmetrical composite consisting of a layer of high index material (e.g., Ta_2O_5 , $n_H=2.05$) clad by a pair of low index material layers (e.g., SiO_2 , $n_L \approx 1.44$) as schematically shown in Fig. 9. This composite material has an optical thickness of one quarter wave at λ_0 , and its effective refractive index is 1.58. If δ_H represents the optical thickness (in quarter waves at λ_0) of the thin high index layer comprising the composite, the optical thicknesses δ_L of the low index material can be calculated as follows:

$$\delta_L = \frac{1}{\pi} \arctan \left(\frac{2 n_H \cdot n_L}{(n_H^2 + n_L^2) \tan \left(\frac{\pi \cdot \delta_H}{2} \right)} \right) \quad (3)$$

The resulting structure has an optical thickness of one quarter wave at λ_0 and allows the use of turning point monitoring for quarter waves during layer deposition.

Figs. 10(a) and 10(b) show a transmission characteristic and the structure, respectively, of the two-material mirror with essentially identical characteristics to a three material mirror design (Figs. 6-7). In this example, $\delta_H=0.14$ and $\delta_L=0.4257$. It should be noted, that the cladding layers of Fig. 9 with optical thicknesses of 0.4257 ($\lambda/4$) joining the one $\lambda/4$ thick low index material layers surrounding the original layer with intermediate refractive index $n_{H1}=1.58$, forms low index layers of 1.4257 $\lambda/4$ optical thickness at λ_0 .

Fig. 11 illustrates a transmission characteristic of a three cavity filter using the two-material mirror structure described above. As can be seen, the broad transmission band around wavelength λ_1 ($\approx 1310\text{nm}$) allows a choice of wavelengths λ_0 within the gain

band of a typical erbium doped fiber amplifier (1520nm - 1570nm) without sacrificing transmission around wavelength λ_1 .

Consistent with a further aspect of the present invention, the third layer shown in Fig. 10b can be eliminated and the optical thickness of both the second and fourth layers
5 can be increased to have an optical thickness of 1.5 times a quarter wavelength to form a single continuous layer having an optical thickness of $\frac{3}{4}$ a quarter wavelength. Likewise, the q-2 layer can be eliminated and the optical thickness of the q-1 and q-3 layers can be increased to have an optical thickness of 1.5 times a quarter wavelength to form a single continuous layer also having an optical thickness of $\frac{3}{4}$ a quarter wavelength.

10 While the foregoing invention has been described in terms of the embodiments discussed above, numerous variations are possible. Accordingly, modifications and changes such as those suggested above, but not limited thereto, are considered to be within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An optical filter, comprising:
a first mirror layer;
a second mirror layer; and
5 a spacer layer provided between said first mirror layer and said second mirror layer; said filter having a transmission spectrum, a first portion of said transmission spectrum having a first bandwidth and a second portion of said transmission spectrum having a second bandwidth greater than said first bandwidth, said first and second
10 portions of said transmission spectrum having associated therewith substantially 100 % transmissivity for a majority of wavelengths within said first and second bandwidths.
2. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein a first wavelength lies within said first portion of said first portion of said transmission spectrum, and a second wavelength lies within said second portion of said transmission spectrum, said first wavelength be substantially equal to 1310 nm and said second wavelength is
15 substantially equal to 1550 nm.
3. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said first mirror layer includes a plurality of dielectric layers.
4. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein a first wavelength
(λ_0) lies within said first portion of said transmission spectrum, and a second wavelength
20 (λ_1) lies within said second portion of said transmission spectrum, said first mirror comprising:
alternating first and second dielectric layers, each said first dielectric layers having a first refractive index ($n_H(\lambda_1)$), and each said second dielectric layers having a second

refractive index ($n_L(\lambda_1)$), said first refractive index being greater than said second refractive index, said first and second refractive indices satisfying the following formula:

$$5 \quad \frac{n_H(\lambda_1)}{n_L(\lambda_1)} = \frac{1+r}{1-r}$$

where r satisfies the following formula:

$$10 \quad r =$$

where q is a sum of said first and second dielectric layers.

5. An optical filter in accordance with claim 3, wherein said plurality of
15 dielectric layers includes a first plurality of layers and a second plurality of layers, each said first plurality of layers including SiO_2 and each said second plurality of layers including Ta_2O_5 .

6. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said second portion of said transmission spectrum having a bandwidth of at least 50 nm.

20 7. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said first mirror includes q dielectric layers, where q is an integer at least equal to 7, each of a first plurality of said q dielectric layers having a first refractive index and each of a second plurality of said q dielectric layers having a second refractive index, said first refractive index being greater than said second refractive index, each of a third plurality of said q
25 dielectric layers having a third refractive index intermediate between said first and second refractive indices.

8. An optical filter in accordance with claim 7, wherein said q dielectric layers constitute a stack of layers having a first outermost layer and a second outermost

layer, a first one of said third plurality of q dielectric layers being spaced from said first outermost layer by a first intermediate one of said q dielectric layers, and a second one of said third plurality of said q dielectric layers being spaced from said second outermost layer by a second intermediate one of said q dielectric layers.

5 9. An optical filter in accordance with claim 7, wherein said first one of said third plurality of said q dielectric layers is a substantially homogenous layer.

10 10. An optical filter in accordance with claim 7, wherein said first one of said third plurality of said q dielectric layers includes a plurality of dielectric layers collectively having a refractive index substantially equal to said third refractive index.

15 11. An optical filter in accordance with claim 10, wherein at least a first one of said plurality of dielectric layers within said first one of said third plurality of said q dielectric layers includes a material identical to that of said first plurality of q dielectric layers, and a second one of said plurality of dielectric layers within said first one of said third plurality of said q dielectric layers includes a material identical to that of said second plurality of q dielectric layers.

 12. An optical filter in accordance with claim 7, wherein said first plurality of said q dielectric layers each includes SiO_2 , and each said second plurality of said q dielectric layers includes Ta_2O_5 .

20 13. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein a wavelength lies within said first portion of said transmission spectrum, said first mirror includes q dielectric layers, said q dielectric layers constitute a stack of layers having a first outermost layer and a second outermost layer, a first one of said q dielectric layers adjacent said first outermost layer having an optical thickness substantially equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ times said wavelength, and a second one of said q dielectric layers adjacent said second

outermost layer having an optical thickness substantially equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ times said wavelength.

14. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said first bandwidth has a magnitude of about 1 nm and said second bandwidth has a magnitude of at least 20
5 nm.

15. An optical filter in accordance with claim 1, wherein a wavelength within said first bandwidth has a value greater than a value of a wavelength within said second bandwidth.

16. An optical filter in accordance with claim 7, wherein said first refractive
10 index is substantially equal to 2.05, said second refractive index is substantially equal to 1.44 and said third refractive index is substantially equal to 1.58.

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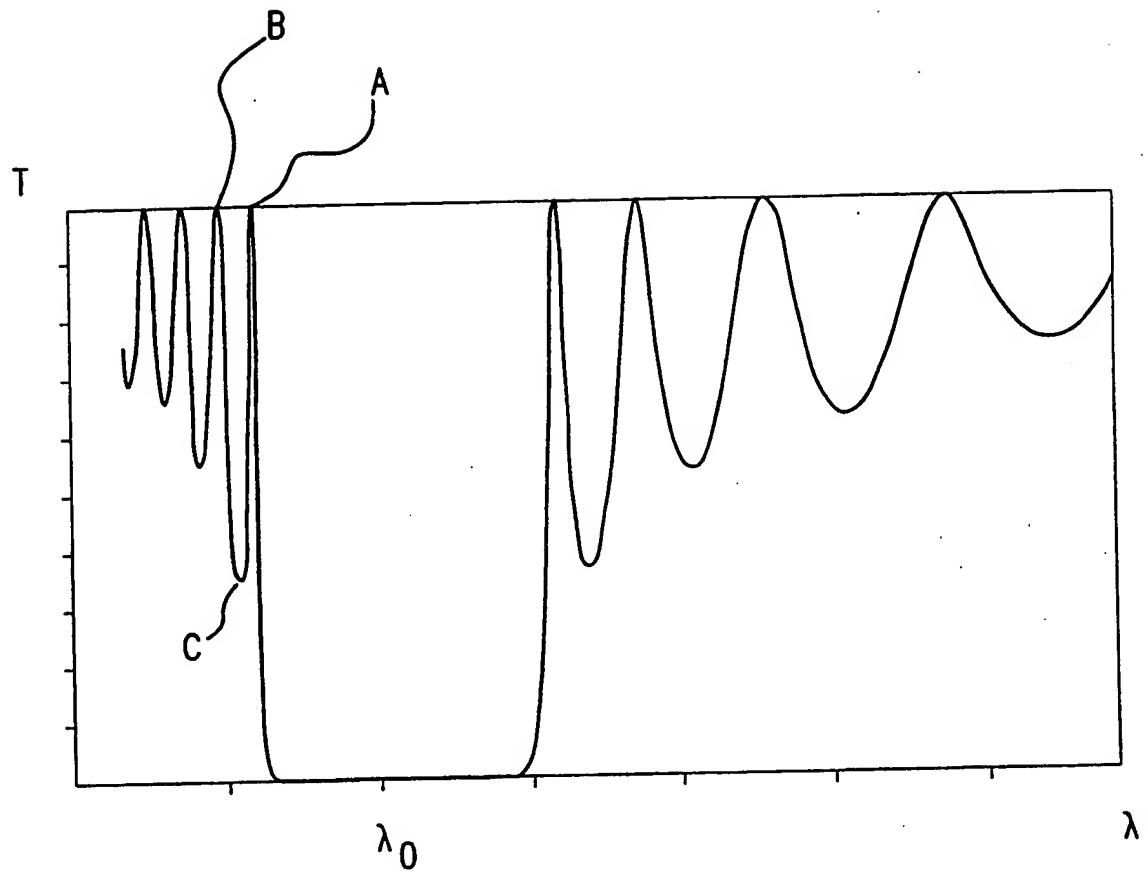


FIG.1

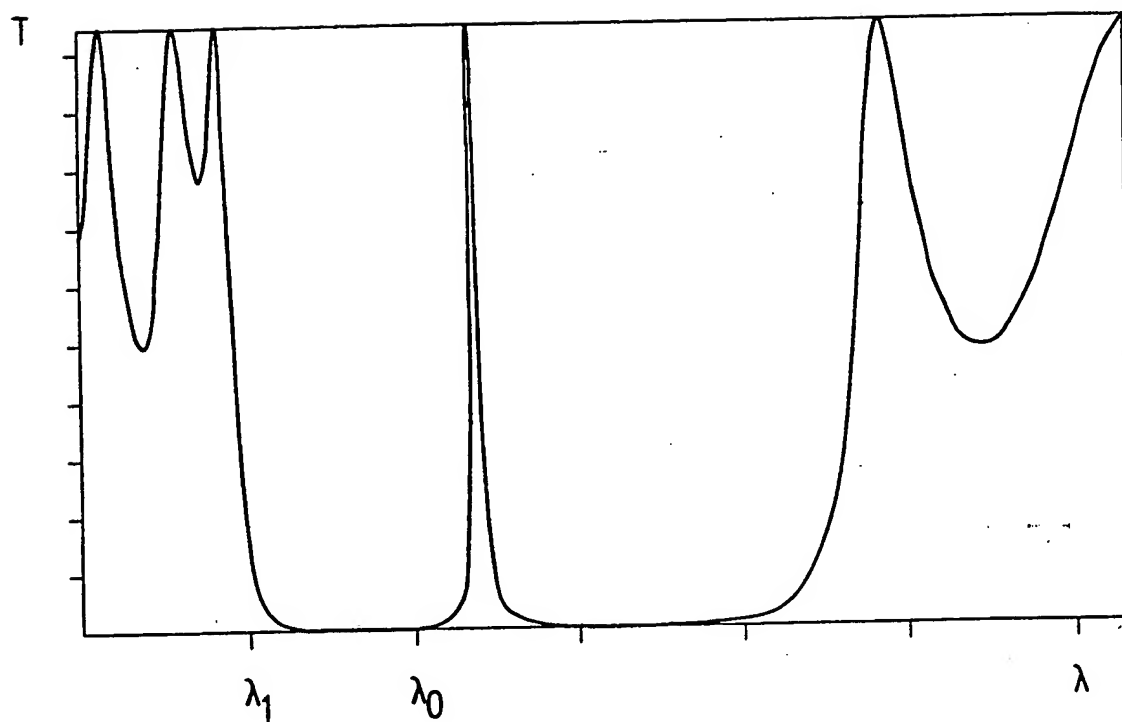


FIG.2

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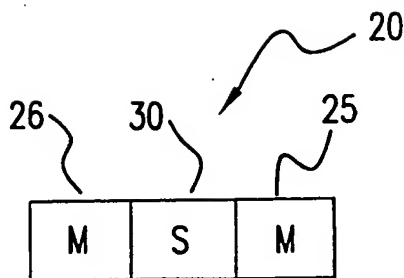


FIG. 3A

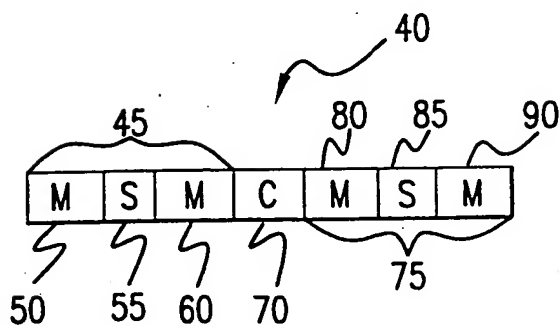


FIG. 3B

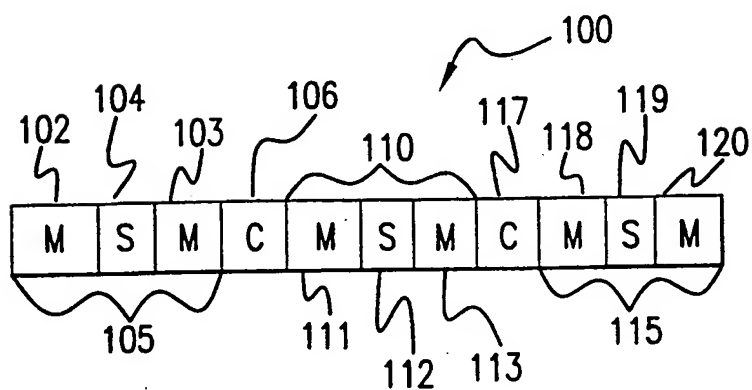


FIG. 3C

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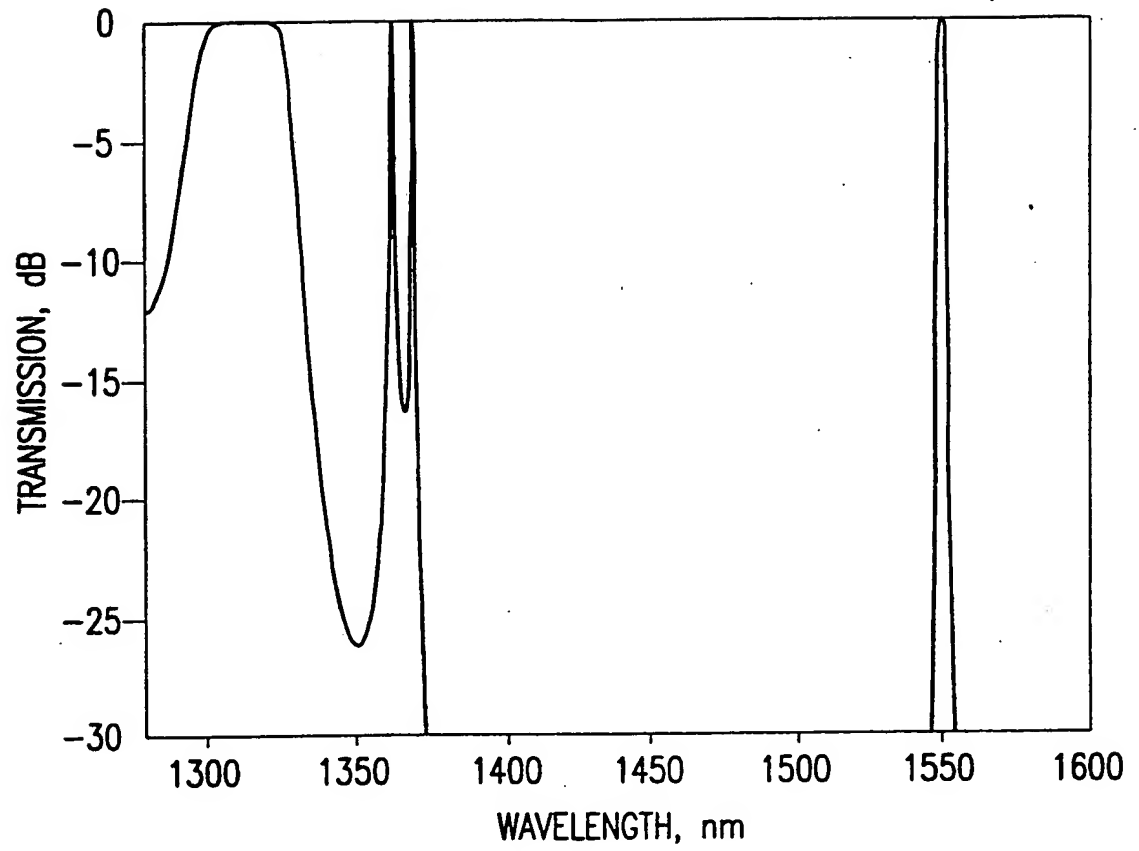


FIG.4

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	H	L	H ₁	L	H ...	H ₁	L	H
LAYER#:	1	2	3	4	5 ...	Q-2	Q-1	Q

FIG.5

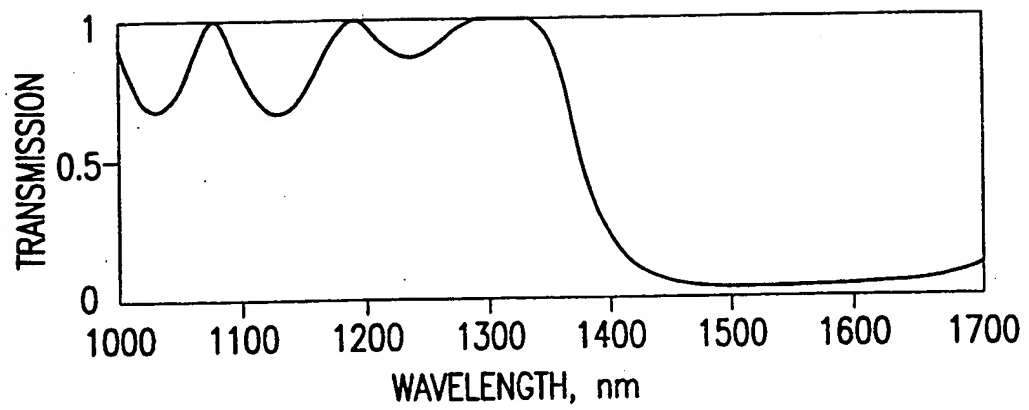


FIG.6

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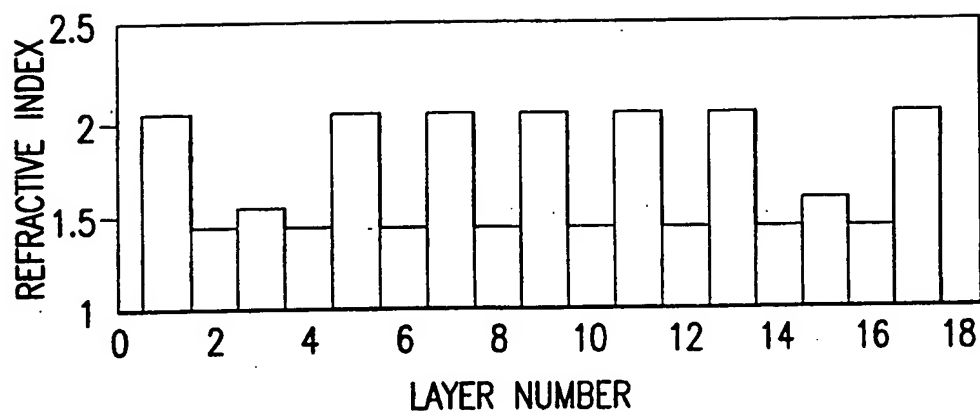


FIG.7

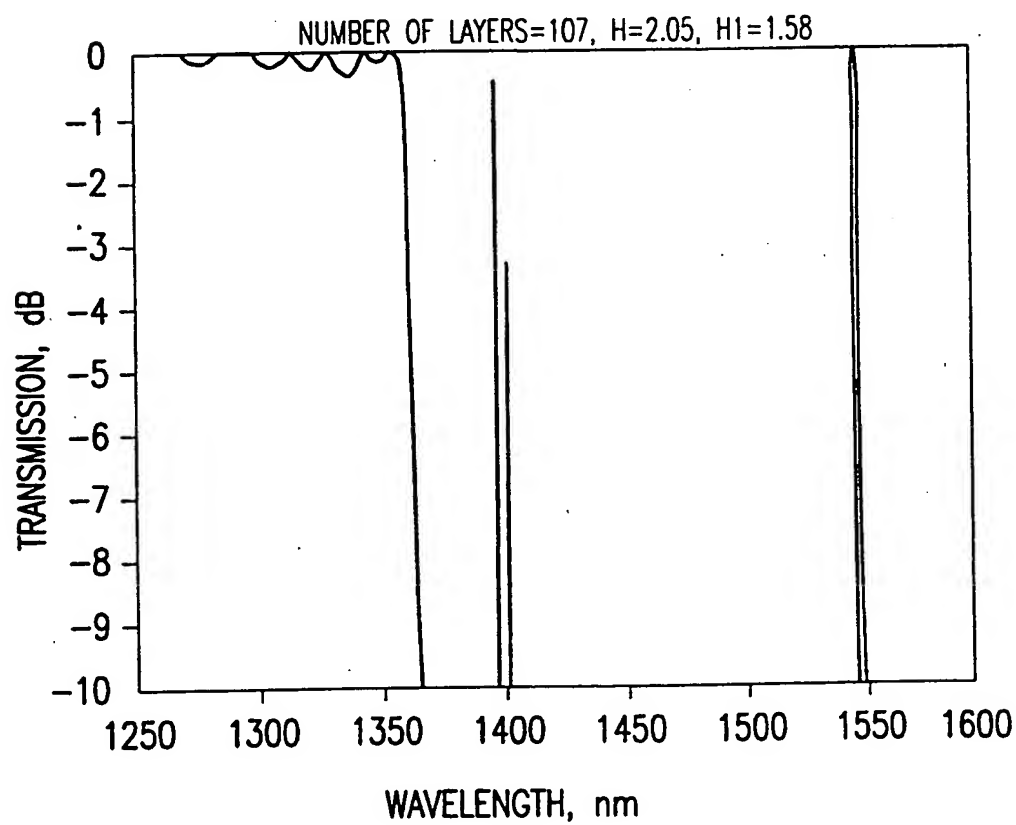
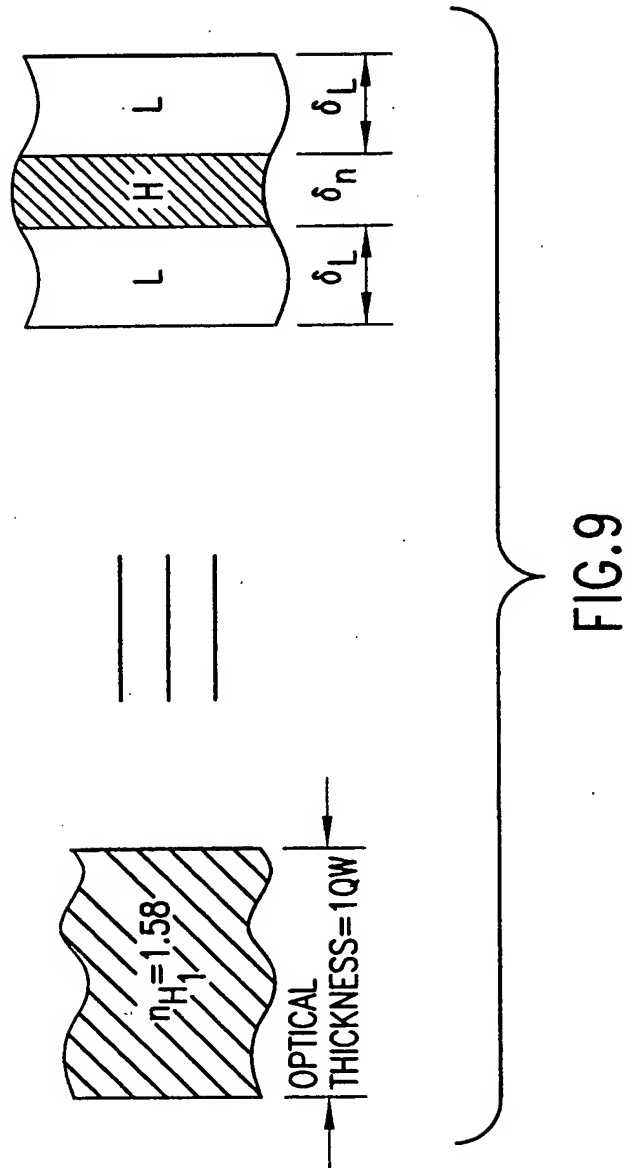


FIG.8

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

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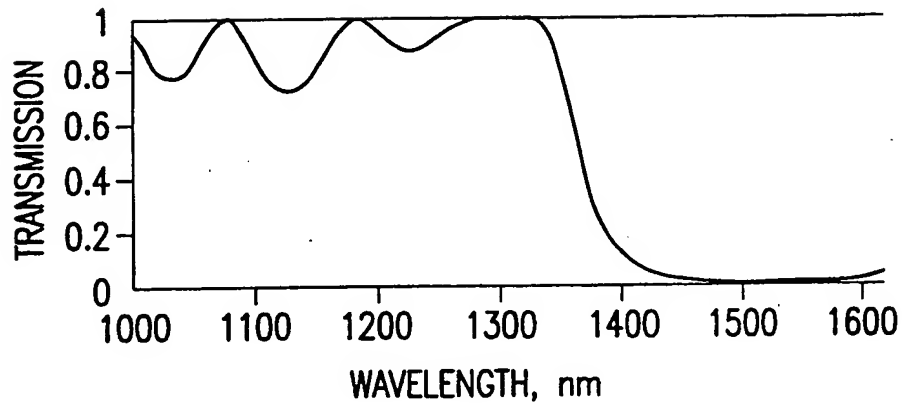


FIG.10A

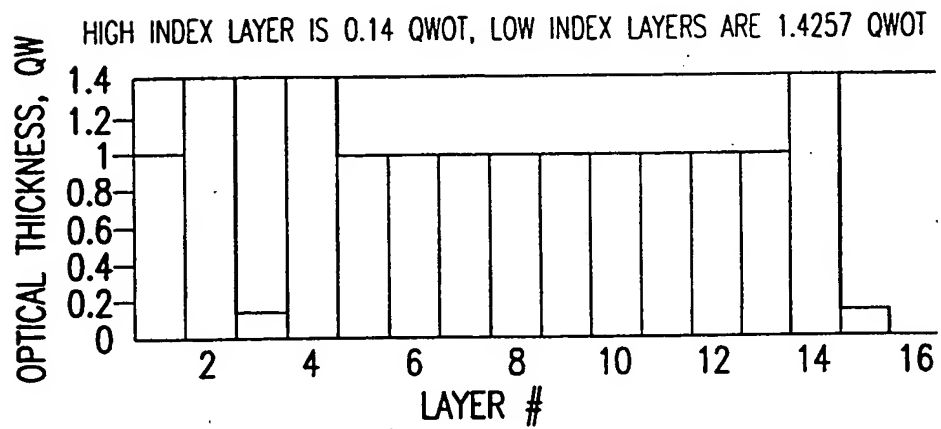


FIG.10B

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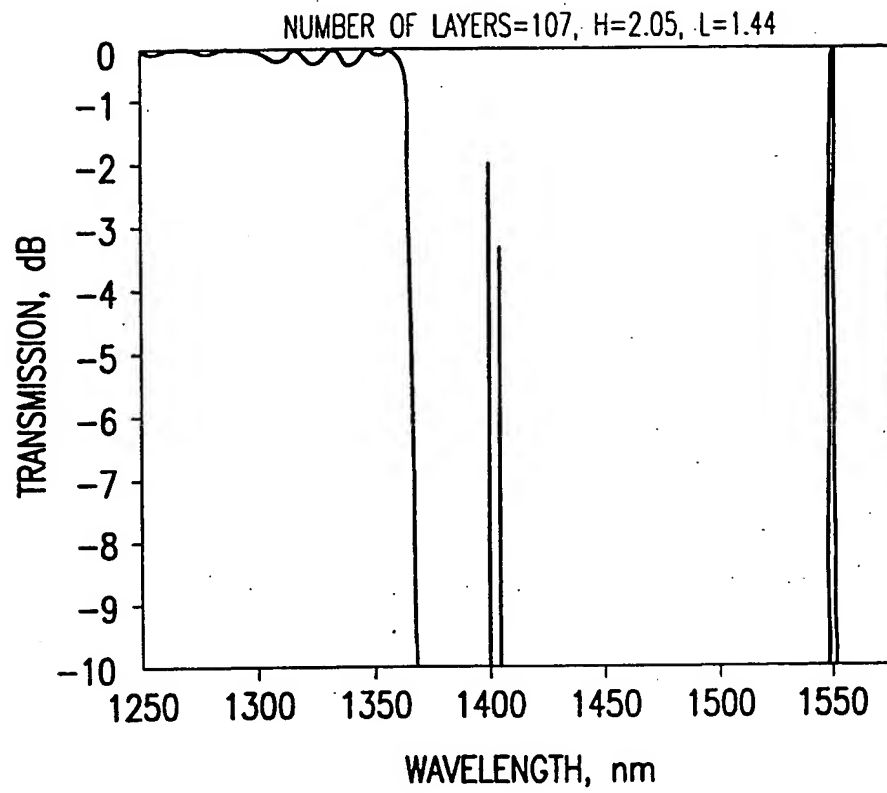


FIG.11

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern nal Application No
PCT/US 00/10072

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G02B5/28

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G02B G21K G01J

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	US 5 410 431 A (SOUTHWELL WILLIAM H) 25 April 1995 (1995-04-25) column 3, line 61 -column 5, line 53; figures 1-14	1-3,7-9 5,6, 10-16
X A	FR 2 658 619 A (MEGADEMINI TAOUFIK) 23 August 1991 (1991-08-23) the whole document	1,3 2,4-16
P,X	US 6 011 652 A (CUSHING DAVID HENRY) 4 January 2000 (2000-01-04) column 3, line 11 -column 5, line 18; figures 5,8; examples 1,4 -/-	1-16

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter. Patent Application No.

PCT/US 00/10072

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	US 5 719 989 A (CUSHING DAVID HENRY) 17 February 1998 (1998-02-17) column 5, line 21 -column 7, line 20 column 9, line 21 - line 36; figures 1B,4B,5B,11 ---	1-16
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A	US 4 747 666 A (ISHIDA MASAHIKO) 31 May 1988 (1988-05-31) column 2, line 33 -column 4, line 31; figures 1-3 -----	1-16

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

information on patent family members

International Application No

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